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HENRY JAMES AND THE NEW JERUSALEM

Of Morality and Style

FEW critics still view Henry James simply as a consciousness or sensibility whose morality has no sanction but taste. It is an inference forced upon us by his style that he must have had a principled attitude toward men and affairs—belief seems a necessary concomitant of the ordered world of his art. The purpose of this essay is to show that this point of view was his father's, and that to read the son in the light of the father's works clears up many of the ambiguities which have troubled the critics.

Since the elder James was a theologian and a moralist it is conceivable that he stood in the same relation to the novelist as Aquinas does to Dante or Kierkegaard to Kafka. His beliefs do not account for the genius of his son, but I think it more than likely that they define the realm in which that genius triumphed. And if this is so—if the novelist's moral commitment can be identified—a judgment of his moral temper becomes possible.

An opportunity to make such a judgment is of the greatest value. It frees the critic from an otherwise exclusive preoccupation with the writer's technique and his relation to his society, and leads him to consider the artist in the most fruitful way—as a fully responsible creator. Once made, such a judgment becomes a point of reference for the critic who wishes to under-

stand himself and his contemporaries as executors of a particular imaginative heritage. What we have done with Henry James may be taken as an index of what we have tried to do with our lives. If, for example, it were to appear that his vision of the world is more like that of Blake than that of any 19th Century novelist or poet (this conclusion is implicit in William Troy's excellent essay, "The Altar of Henry James") the questions of fact and of values raised would require a recasting of our views, not simply of James, but also of his affiliations with the writers of his time and our own.

Before I attempt to describe the theology of the elder James and apply it to some of his son's works, I will list a few of these questions about James and ourselves. . . Does the resemblance between Blake and James the novelist follow from the absorption in Swedenborg shared by the poet and the elder James? What is the general significance of our preoccupation with the novelist if his father's mysticism was in fact the pole-star of his thinking? How closely is that mysticism related to the current existentialism? How did portions of James's works come to be issued under such misleading titles as *Stories of Writers and Artists* and *The Art of the Novel*? What is the significance for James and for us of the curiously attenuated and distorted sexuality of his characters? What is the meaning in and for our culture of the assertion that James did not concern himself with social problems? All these questions are of course subsidiary to the single question which will come up in a number of forms below: if a use of his father's mysticism freed James to be a poet by ordering his view of man and nature, what sort of poet is he, and how is he to be compared to others likewise committed and freed?

The Father's Ideas

The elder James is not a difficult writer in the sense that he is at given points obscure or illogical or paradoxical. He is actually a brilliant expositor of his peculiar doctrine. The difficulty is that

for nearly forty years he lived by assumptions which it is extremely hard for most men to make even for a moment. So far as I know he has had but one competent reader, the younger Henry James. To his son he can have presented no difficulties because the younger James grasped what he called his father's "tone," the quality of the movement of his thought. Before I go further with my external description I will quote the passage from *Notes of a Son and Brother* which most clearly points to the nature of this quality:

If he so endeared himself wasn't it, one asked as time went on, through his never having sentimentalised or merely meditated away, so to call it, the least embarrassment of the actual about him, and having with a passion peculiarly his own kept together his stream of thought, however transcendent and the stream of life however humanised? There was a kind of experiential authority in his basis as he felt his basis — there being no human predicament he couldn't by a sympathy more *like* direct experience than any I have known enter into. . . .

So far we are on firm ground. The son found a basis in his father's character for the most important fact about him as a thinker: that he held moral, political, religious or artistic conformism to be the greatest sin, and spontaneity in encountering immediate experience the greatest virtue.

Beyond this point the difficulties begin. First of these is the fact that as a thinker the theologian was a total non-conformist. He held that the key to understanding in every sphere was an inversion of the apparent, the commonsensical, the accepted. To this he adds the assertion that everything (including God) is undergoing change—what he called "physical statics" is the study of an illusion produced by "moral dynamics"—what is real is moral and what is moral is in motion. His third demand on us is that we prepare to surrender personal identity altogether in order to achieve the apocalyptic union of God and human society which he called "the divine-natural humanity."

Since we are not accustomed to thinking in religious terms it

is probably best to approach the elder James as if he were a secular mystic like Bergson or Spengler. God will then appear as a principle of explanation rather than an object of devotion. I begin therefore with his views of the human psyche, nature, and history. The fundamental premise of his psychology is that man suffers from an alienation from the source of love and truth—he is characterized, as in Freud, by his wants. In James these wants may be fulfilled in two ways, by appearances and by realities. The man who wants to "appropriate" things and expects a reward in heaven for good conduct on earth, is seeking to fulfill his wants with appearances. The man who utterly denies an independent selfhood and in no way seeks to distinguish himself from his fellows or enhance his sense of personal fullness through acquisition or righteous behavior is aware of the kinship of man and God and anticipates the coming of the divine-natural humanity. His only reality is his awareness of God.

Between the point at which all men are possessed by the delusion of selfhood (the beginning of the Christian epoch) and that at which the New Jerusalem of Swedenborg appears and testifies to man's divinity lies history, which may be defined as the tragic process of self-confrontation which the race must go through in order to become a true society. In this process nature plays the role of Goethe's Mephistopheles—the spirit who denies. Nature provides the shows of appearance which are the food of man's sense of selfhood, and he who cherishes his selfhood is a moral fool. But nature is at the same time necessary because the self is necessary—there could be no creation without a sense of selfhood. If God had created perfect creatures animated by the divine love he would have had no object to love. Such creatures would be miniature gods indistinguishable from God himself, and could not come to a separate consciousness. What he in fact creates is a set of creatures opposed to himself into whom he can pour his love. The cosmic drama is therefore one of conflict between appearance and reality, but appearance is a metaphysical

necessity and not in the least a ground for philosophic dualism. Idealists who argued for such a dualism were condemned by the elder James for making God a wicked snob. Men must, as the theologian sees it, be made to confront their own delusions one by one and acknowledge themselves mere ciphers before they can become conscious recipients of the divine love.

The stage in this process which is most important here is the moment at which the man who has filled the bowl of his selfhood with all the shows of appearance becomes aware that his "appropriation" (James's term for making something part of one's self or *proprium*) whether of money, scientific knowledge, or righteousness, has left him thirsty in a moral desert. At this moment an experience such as came to the elder James in the forties makes the sufferer aware of the self *as such* and the delusion of phenomenal identity vanishes. (The theologian, while sitting well-fed and contented before his dining-room fire suddenly became aware of a presence "raying malignity" in the room.) Thereafter the regenerate man is once more possessed of the world in all its beauty and variety but his view of it has undergone a complete inversion. He no longer sees it as an external object—nature—he sees it as a reflection of his own consciousness (human nature) which he *shares* with the divinity. The act of self-abnegation puts him at one with God who becomes known to him as the generic nature of man. He becomes fellow to the creator as a member of a society in which (to use Freud's terms) Eros has wholly triumphed over Death. In this society "spiritual individuality" (action rather than character) distinguishes men from one another. The extant prototype of the spiritual individual is the artist who manifests his individuality in his work alone, just as the creator is known to us only through our own perception of the workings of our generic nature, our perception, that is, of the moral flux and reflux.

In order to introduce certain technical terms used by the elder James I recapitulate man's psychological history, literally the his-

tory of all existence. Since God makes the world as a projection of his own consciousness (later to be shared by man) James calls what we should name the unconscious the "sleeping Adam," and identifies it with the world or nature. This unconscious is, initially, disordered. "Thus the *homo* divinely created (the universal man, Adam or earth) is in its own nature a chaos, and only by regeneration a cosmos." "Eve" or selfhood awakens the Adam to an awareness of self—confers, that is, the illusion of phenomenal identity. This illusion is fed by what we call science. Science "orders" nature in a fashion which precisely inverts its true character. What love has made, selfishness appropriates. Or, to use the symbolism of the theologian, Adam becomes dependent upon the Eve, which is in its turn dependent on the senses and the phenomenal understanding. But there is a third force within the psyche, conscience ("God-in-us") which confers spiritual insight and does not depend upon the senses or the intellect. Here I must qualify what was said above about the two ways in which man fulfills his wants. The self knows appearances, the conscience realities, but *what* is known is in each case the same. The two modes of knowing are not distinguished, as in Kant, by a difference in their objects. What man knows is always God as he is deployed in nature. The difference lies in the fact that conscience views nature as evidence of the divine nature of humanity while the phenomenal understanding posits it as something external and susceptible of appropriation.

Our history is that of a struggle between conscience and the self, the one seeking to refer all that exists to the divine nature common to us, the other seeking to engross all existence and separate man from man. In the following passage on our moral history James uses the term "vir" instead of Eve for the self and "goodness and truth" for the manifestation within us of the divine love and the divine wisdom.

All the phenomena of our moral history go to show the *homo* or created man, the man of interior affection and thought, utterly un-

conscious of the infinite goodness and truth which alone give him *being*, and joyfully allying himself with the *vir* or finite conscious man, the man of mere organic appetite and passion, who gives him contingent *existence* only, or renders him phenomenal to himself; shows him, as the symbolic narrative phrases it, "*leaving his father and his mother, and cleaving unto his wife until they become one flesh.*"

Three related problems require further explanation. What is sin in such a cosmos? leads to the question of God's motives in creation, and this to the question of the character of Christ's mission as construed by the elder James. In the passage I quote he distinguishes three kinds of sin, selfishness, worldliness and spiritual pride.

The Church studiously fosters the sentiment of moral worth or dignity in its disciples . . . and thus delivers them over bound hand and foot to spiritual pride. . . . However selfish or worldly a man may be these are good honest natural evils, and you have only to apply a motive sufficiently stimulating in either case, and you will induce the subject to forbear them. But spiritual pride is inward evil exclusively, pertaining to the selfhood of the man or livingly appropriated by him as his own, and cannot therefore become known to him save in the form of an outward natural representation; for it is not like moral evil, mere outward oppugnancy to good, but it is the actual and deadly profanation of good, or the lavish acknowledgement of it with a view of subordinating it to personal, or selfish and worldly ends. It is the only truly formidable evil known to God's providence, being that of *self-righteousness*, and hence the only evil which essentially threatens to undermine the foundations of God's throne.

The worldly man who is the subject of his animal nature and the selfish man who is eager for social status are not condemned—they cannot transcend the limiting conditions of phenomenal identity at one leap. Love to one's self and love to one's fellows are the limiting conditions of the present phase of our consciousness and we must live out the struggle between self and conscience which culminates in awareness of the wicked proprium or Eve. But the man guilty of spiritual evil makes his very conscience, the divine love itself, the subject of appropriation. The elder James

(following *Genesis* which speaks of the creation of man male and female *before* the appearance of Eve) often calls the conscience the "female" Adam. Femininity in general comes to symbolize the activity of the divine love in us. What the man guilty of spiritual pride does is to make an *outward natural representation* of the indwelling divine love which has no natural form. His act is therefore an appropriation of the godhead. (The self, in other words, can appropriate nothing that does not *appear* to it.) The "bodily" churches (existent ecclesiasticisms) are such images. We shall meet others in discussing the novelist. But the important point here is that these images are invariably inversions of the spiritual force they seek to engross. The "church" (often used collectively for all existing institutions) inverts the divine wisdom; the Eve, the principle of selfishness, inverts the divine love. The knowledge which binds men together in the church is knowledge of the merely phenomenal; the love which the Eve exhibits is the love of self. James's use of this Swedenborgian principle brings us back to the question of just what sort of creator his God is.

Swedenborg had held that Christian theologians did not understand the significance of the creation. We are in fact made in God's image, but this does not mean, as I have noted above, that we are replicas of God. We are opposed to him as the object stamped out is opposed to the die. A created object, a "creature," is, James argues, characterized by what it is not rather than what it is. Otherness to God, alienation from God, is the very thing that defines us. Since we lack the divine love and cannot comprehend the divine wisdom we have no being. We simply exist as so many moulds, matrices or receptacles awaiting an influx of being itself. (James often referred to this initial stage of our existence as "formation," reserving the term "creation" for the triumph of conscience.) Creation, that is, is not simply a putting-forth of God's energy; it is not complete until that energy has flowed back to God. God submerges himself in men in order to

make them divine. The creation is not complete until they become so.

Creation necessarily *involves* the creator and obscures his perfection, in the exact ratio of its *evolving* the creature and illustrating his imperfection. Unless therefore the creature *himself* reproduce the creative infinitude concealed in his nature it must be forever obliterated from remembrance.

The selfhood or *proprium* is therefore morally neutral in the sight of God. The self exists so that we may become aware of our otherness to God and overcome it. Nature and history are the record in space and time of our delusion that we do *not* share the divine nature and are not one with God. The delusion, the positing of self-consciousness, is the necessary ground of our perception of our otherness to God. This is surely the most sporting theory of redemption ever devised. James's God puts himself completely at man's mercy. The descent of God into man makes possible the ascent of man to God, who subjects himself to the conditions of human life so that man may become his equal. In James's account, Christ's feat was an utter denial, under the most extreme temptations, of the self. The event made manifest the "creative infinitude" concealed in us. The incarnation is therefore thought of as the type of the activity of the divine love in man. "The truth incurs this humiliation, undergoes this falsification on *our* behalf exclusively, who, because we have by nature no perception of God as a spirit, but only as a person like ourselves, are even brutally ignorant of the divine power and ways." Christ attests the divine life in us by renouncing the life of selfhood as factitious, frustrating and vile. (Both James and Swedenborg make an extensive use of scatological terms to describe the phenomenal.)

When the Eve's phenomenal understanding has built a science which is a complete inversion of divine truth (a wholly "bodily" church) we perceive the self which has contrived the inversion, and the divinity within us is released from bondage. Thereafter

we order nature as a true cosmos, an image of God's wisdom, which becomes our own. Man, says the theologian, "has the task and the power divinely given him of subduing all nature to himself, and so leading it back to him from whom it originally comes." With this consummation what may be called the "field" of the creation reaches an equilibrium in the unified consciousness of God and man. What has taken place is a "marriage" of the finite and the infinite: the Adam has broken off his liaison with the Eve and been wholly vivified by the female Adam or divine love; the Eve has been deprived of phenomena and forced to accept the fruits of the divine wisdom. Selfishness gives way to love and science to "spiritual perception."

When one looks at the elder James's theory of personality in cross-section, without regard to man's origin or his ultimate destiny, it is seen to be an anticipation of Freudian theory. The sleeping Adam, the chaos of the unconscious, may be compared to the id, the concept of the *proprium* or self to the ego, and the conscience or social self to the superego. Moreover the limiting conditions of our present consciousness are held to be self-love on the one side and brotherly love on the other. But these concepts are not, in the end, employed as we employ them. Conscience is identified with the divine love, and man has a divine assurance that Eros will triumph over Death that no modern theory would provide. It is also possible to make an analogy between the process of regeneration in James and psychoanalysis, since the whole of existence is centred in the psyche, and the divinity seated within leads us to confront our selves. In the elder James, however, this process annihilates the ego as such, and forms a society in which, as in a symphony orchestra or a colony of ants, individuals are distinguishable in function but not in character. For these reasons James's theory of personality is not separable from his theology. In fact the two are identical.

The greatness of the elder James lies in the fact that he worked out a theory of consciousness which provides an account

in dynamic terms of the forces which relate individuals and groups, and that this account, like modern psychology, deals with the transformation of one form of moral energy into another. The adequacy of the theory is limited by the maker's own emotional constellation, but it was a great achievement for its day, and ought to be recognized as a landmark in the history of American thought.

The conception of the universe as a field of moral forces involves the assertion that a man is but a centre at which these forces encounter each other. The theologian uses a biological simile: "The individual man is only the inorganic protoplasm, so to speak, which goes to subsequent cell-formation in the family, the tribe, the city, the nation." Significantly enough, William Troy arrives at a similar conclusion about the novelist's treatment of character: "The individual, in the language of modern physics, is only an 'event,' to be defined in terms of a given field of forces." But what is implicit in the novels of Henry James is explicit in his father's works. The universe he describes presents no personal or social "problems," no fixed points of strain and resistance because there are no discrete entities—consciousness is alone real.

There is no such *thing* as human nature outside of men's consciousness; no such thing as a *race* of man existing in itself, or independently of our mental experience. . . . Thus human nature is no fixed or absolute, but an altogether free or empirical quantity, conditioned at its highest upon such a harmony of interests between man and man, as amounts to an actual incarnation of the law of conscience in every individual bosom; and at its lowest consequently, upon such a conflict of interests between man and man as degrades human life to a level lower than that of the brutes.

Because the elder James's vision was of flux and transformation he constantly employs language suggesting movement, and oppositions whose reconciliation involves transformation. (His favorite adverb, "livingly," is cousin to all those which have so much annoyed some of his son's readers.) Both the father and

son distorted our Aristotelian conceptual inheritance to suggest the flow of experience. They also broke down other barriers. Individualism, a normal relationship between the sexes, the ideal of a decent society given the materials at hand, were all discarded in favor of a myth which disposed of all problems and ordered all existence. But to call this theory of consciousness a myth is not to deny its great power as a means of understanding people and their relationship to one another. If all men had the emotional make-up of these two we might call it a sufficient means. But, since they do not, it remains a myth, that is, a point of view regarded as an absolute.

The novelist's critics have so strongly emphasized his sense that what human beings think and feel is the only reality that I need not push the point here. His world, like his father's, is constituted of consciousness, and consciousness alone. (*The American Scene* provides the most direct evidence of this.) On this count there is a strong resemblance between father and son. But far more decisive evidence of temperamental sympathy and doctrinal agreement is to be found in the novels and stories.

This internal evidence is of three sorts. The elder James points to two crucial (and alternative) possibilities in human experience. One may renounce selfhood, banish the Eve, and take possession of the world as an image of one's nature. Or one may become a demon by appropriating the divine love within one's soul and in this way make selfhood absolute. The younger James treated these themes repeatedly. This is the kind of evidence most important for our knowledge of him as an artist. A second kind which overlaps the first is made up of the instances of direct borrowing of the symbols and terminology of his father. The third kind (which I largely neglect in this essay) is chiefly etymological. The novelist was fond of private allusions to his symbolic scheme. Of external evidence I have little, and I am not much concerned with it here since my intention is simply to give a more convincing account of the novelist's

moral allegiance than we now have.

Before I deal with the novelist's dramatic uses of his father's ideas I wish to present a resemblance between the two which, like their common concern with consciousness, can be illustrated by the use of parallel quotation. This is their agreement about the function of the artist.

Lovers of the Image of Life

The elder James once wrote that the artist was "the only regenerate image of God in nature, the only living revelation of the Lord on earth." In passage after passage in volume after volume he uses the artist as the type of the divine-natural humanity to come. This is a fact of striking importance for the biographies of William and Henry James, but in the case of the latter it is something more. The novelist seems to have accepted the thesis on which his father based his claim for the artist. He dramatized it in *The Tragic Muse*, used it in his prefaces, and made it the basis of a number of stories, notably *The Figure in the Carpet*.

This thesis has already been mentioned. The distinctive thing about the artist is that he exhibits, as far as one now can, spiritual individuality. If he is truly an artist he is selfless. He claims no recognition for what he is, but only for what he does. His activity reveals him as a "regenerate image" of God because he orders that revelation of God's nature which is his consciousness under the auspices of the conscience or social self rather than the Eve or selfish self. The true artist is not a person—he is a creative force, recognizable, as the creator himself is recognizable, only in the quality of the thing he makes.

In other words, the law of all spiritual existence is that doing determines being, or that character is based upon action, not action upon character. Whatsoever one actually does when one is free from the coercion of necessity [nature] or the constraint of prudence [society] is the measure of what one really is.

The man who seeks distinction on the ground of his character

only increases his likeness to everyone else. But the artist who surrenders his selfhood acquires his own note, his style. In his late works the elder James is prone to emphasize the inability of the artist to compete with God in creation because what the former makes must be shaped out of the materials at hand, while God first forms the creature and then brings him to life. But the artist remains the type of the free or spontaneous man. "Art is nothing else than the obedience of one's spontaneous tastes and attractions, uncontrolled either by nature or society, by necessity or duty." The artist is neither worldly nor selfish. But a man may call himself an artist, disavow both his animal nature and his social status and yet fall a victim to spiritual pride. This is the theme of *The Tragic Muse* in which Henry James used Gabriel Nash to represent his father's point of view.

Perhaps I should say the "spiritual" as opposed to the realistic theme, since the ostensible situation of Nick Dormer, the painter, who gives up the prospect of marriage to a wealthy woman and a brilliant political career for his art, is that described in this passage from the elder James.

If the divine man, the man of genius, the man of inward force, the man of ideas, in short, the Artist, would succumb to society; if he would say nothing and do nothing which society disallowed, nothing subversive of its customs and traditions; if he would utter no prophecies and confess no want of a superior righteousness to that which flowed from the obedience of existing institutions; then society would gladly honor him, and give him the pomp and glory of all the kingdoms of the world.

But the artist is unable to gratify society in this thing. He lives from God alone, from the inspiration of truth and beauty in his own soul, and he cannot acknowledge any law or institution which limits these. Hence in an immature or dissentient society his lot is to suffer outwardly, to be crucified in the flesh even while he is being glorified in the spirit, even in order to his being thus glorified.

But here as elsewhere in the novelist the realistic appearance is belied by the spiritual reality. This is actually the situation of Gabriel Nash, the prophet of the novel and the guardian angel

of Nick Dormer and Miriam Rooth. Dormer, who "takes likenesses" of the muse who should have been his inspiration, who makes, in other words, "an outward natural representation" of the divinity she represents, is in a fair way to be damned, and, as Nash makes plain, a remarkably pure case of the pursuit of art for art's sake. All this emerges in Nash's exposition for Dormer's benefit, of his "little system."

Nash describes himself as an artist, but his qualification, "I work in life!" is not intelligible to what he calls Dormer's "poor British wit." The painter, though devoted, is obtuse as people were obtuse about the elder James. To be an artist in life is to be one of those whom the novelist elsewhere described as "lovers of the image of life," an artist who refers all experience to the divine nature and represents it in a distinctive style. God alone lives—to "live" is, according to the elder James, to participate in the divine nature. God he therefore calls "Life" and man's generic nature is the "image" of life. In brief, *it is the act of seeing that image as one's own which makes man divine*. This explains the emphasis on vision and the use of the term "seer" in the quotations which follow. (The elder James terms Swedenborg a "seer." One of the key sentences in his son's account of the theologian is, "I saw that my father saw.")

The first point in Gabriel Nash's "little system" is "the idea of being just the same to everyone." He explains: "People have so bemuddled themselves that the last thing they can conceive is that one should be simple." Dormer and his family have found Nash paradoxical to a degree. He replies, "Lord, do you call yourself simple?" The reason Nash is hard to understand is that he appears to do nothing and to have no personal interests. His reply to Dormer points to this freedom of his, which is a freedom from the bonds of nature and society, savagery and "interest."

Absolutely; in the sense of having no interest of my own to push, no nostrum to advertise, no power to conciliate, no axe to grind. I'm not a savage—ah far from it! but I really think I'm perfectly independent.

Other people, Nash continues, try to get one to enter the "boats" of their interests, dogmas or prejudices. These are the "unregenerate." He is not of their number, having "jumped over long ago." But Dormer, who cannot conceive of a free man, has a suspicion that Nash belongs to a cult of aesthetes. He asks whether the regenerate do not have a narrowing creed of their own. If so Nash is "no better" than other people. Nash's reply contains the charge, so often preferred by the elder James, that most men invert reality.

I don't pretend to be better, for we're all miserable sinners; I only pretend to be bad in a pleasanter, brighter way — by what I can see. It's the simplest thing in the world; just take for granted our right to be happy and brave. What's essentially kinder and more helpful than that, what's more beneficial? But the tradition of dreariness, of stodginess, of dull dense literal prose has so sealed people's eyes that they've only ended by thinking the most natural of all things the most perverse.

So far Nash has said that we are to treat all men alike and renounce our animal desires and social status; that to do so is to invert conventional morality and discard materialism, and that we are all equally bad, presumably in the sight of God. He goes on to develop the positive aspect of the elder James's faith. What is of final importance is spiritual individuality, here called "form" and "style."

Life consists of the personal experiments of each of us and the point of an experiment is that it shall succeed. What we contribute is our treatment of the material, our rendering of the text, our style. A sense of the qualities of a style is so rare that many persons should doubtless be forgiven for not being able to read, or at all events to enjoy, us; but is that a reason for giving it up — for not being, in this other sphere, if one possibly can, an Addison, a Ruskin, a Renan? Ah we must write our best; it's the great thing we can do in the world, on the right side. One has one's form, *que diable*, and a mighty good thing that one has. I'm not afraid of putting all life into mine, and without unduly squeezing it. I'm not afraid of putting in honor and courage and charity — without spoiling them: on the contrary I shall only do them good.

There is, in fact, no other way to be virtuous but that of expressing the virtues through one's style. Nash's three moralists were also stylists, and Ruskin, if not the others, was conscious of the relationship. Nash sees an identity where Ruskin saw a bond. Any other mode of being virtuous would involve one in man's meanest action, that of not "being just the same to everyone," of calling one man more or less virtuous than another, or, in the elder James's words, being guilty of "a respect of persons." The novelist has managed to put the essence of his father's morality in a very few words.

To fill out the picture of the artist as one who is distinguished by the manner in which he renders his account of man's generic nature I quote two passages from the preface to *The Golden Bowl*.

The "taste" of the poet is at bottom and so far as the poet in him prevails over everything else, his active sense of life: in accordance with which truth to keep one's hand on it is to hold the silver clue to the whole labyrinth of his consciousness.

A little further on, speaking of the propriety of calling those who write in prose "poets," the novelist says:

. . . it is clear to the most limited intelligence that the title we give him is the only title of general application and convenience for those who passionately cultivate the image of life and the art, on the whole so beneficial, of projecting it. The seer and speaker under the descent of the god is the "poet," whatever his form, and he ceases to be one only when his form, whatever else it may nominally or superficially or vulgarly be, is unworthy of the god; in which event, we promptly submit, he isn't worth talking of at all. He becomes so worth it, and the god so adopts him and so confirms his charming office and name, in the degree in which his impulse and passion are general and comprehensive.

In the terms of the elder James's description of the artist's relation to God the "labyrinth" of the poet's consciousness in the first of these two passages and the "image of life" in the second are one and the same thing. The image is the Adam and the

poet's "sense of life" is the "silver clue" (or cord) which binds him to the "life" or female Adam seated within—the "god" of the second quotation. This will appear an unreasonably strict construction of the novelist's figures of speech, but I must ask the reader to accept it provisionally.

A second difficulty (which has already led to a series of repetitions of the views of the theologian) is that the reader must keep constantly in mind the fact that for the elder James there are no inner and outer worlds—that man is not situated over against an external nature but rather contains nature. It may help to think of the system as a narcissism full-blown in which the whole world is the image of the poet's soul. To square this with the theologian's point of view simply add the assertion that there is but one soul—the generic soul of mankind which is the indwelling God. This, I take it, is the meaning of the novelist's claim for the poet whose vision is not of the part but of the whole: "his impulse and passion are general and comprehensive."

Realistically (that is, in appearance) the poet's style is a mark of his identity; morally it is evidence of his awareness of our generic nature; spiritually it is the part accorded him in the concert of the divine natural humanity. Thus style becomes a metaphysical quality. This paradoxical idea of the development of individualism through participation in universal being is not confined to the elder James and his son, Henry. It is a characteristically American myth which occurs in figures as different as Emerson, Melville and William James. The elder James made it a poetic anticipation of a science of man (such as is now being developed by Kardiner and his co-workers in anthropology and psychology) by incorporating it in a dynamic theory of personality.

The agreement between father and son on the function of the artist tells us nothing about particular artists. In fact, we become artists or spiritual individuals by becoming concupiscent and social nonentities. It is an agreement on how to construe the fact that the world is constituted of consciousness. Their conclusion is

that their consciousness is God's, and that if we renounce our identity as does the artist who "lives from God alone," we can share that consciousness. In the two sections which follow my aim is to show that the novelist was an inveterate allegorist who dramatized again and again the two great alternatives offered man: renunciation of the Eve or other self, and appropriation of "God-in-us" (conscience) in the hope of making the self absolute. In the theologian these alternatives represent two ways of viewing the basic human situation. I separate them here for convenience in exposition.

The Portrait Theme

All James's readers are aware of the frequency with which women dominate the scene. They exhibit a greater moral grandeur than men, have a greater capacity for moral obliquity, and, in general, a fuller emotional range. On this point there is a wealth of able criticism. Once again (as in the case of consciousness) I propose to push this critical consensus to its logical extreme. My thesis is that the differentiation of the sexes in the works of Henry James is primarily symbolic and only secondarily, or for appearance's sake, realistic. This is not to say that appearance can ever be dispensed with. Without the phenomenal delusions engendered by selfhood we should never come to consciousness, never be aware that we were estranged from God. In this special sense we may call the novelist a realist if we like, and regard his men and women as "real." But they are presentments all the same, and the secret of their psychological economy lies in their spiritual significance. The reason that women dominate James's scene is that they represent in varying degrees, and with the infinite variety of dramatic shadings available to genius, the conscience or female Adam and the Eve or selfhood.

I quote two passages from the elder James's *Substance and Shadow* to make plain the symbolic function of sex, and to introduce that distinction between American and European attitudes

toward the "heart or feminine element" (the female Adam) which gives rise to the international situation.

One reconciles himself after a while to the sight of priest and monk abroad: for we men are such born nuisances yet everywhere, especially under our European or moral form of development, which exhibits the heart or feminine element abjectly servile to the head or masculine element, that a mere ritual righteousness would seem to be our proper badge, the only approximation we can yet make to God's image. But woman when exempted from our bedevilment, when loosed from our gross Adamic servitude, and left to herself, to her own spontaneous tendencies, is gentle and modest and good: *i.e.* lives already and does not merely aspire to live; obeys a direct Divine inspiration, conceives of the Holy Ghost, and brings forth immaculate fruit. She has no aptitude for ritual religion save as a way of escape from our brutality, from the dreariness we impose on her existence. For she herself when freely pronounced is truly the consummation of the literal church, the end of all the culture the race has undergone on earth; perfect womanhood in nature meaning nothing more and nothing less than the visible form of our unseen spiritual manhood. Woman is the normal outcome — at once perfect flower and perfect fruit — of human progress in interior invisible realms of being; so that we may at any time exactly measure the comparative advance of the public mind; the comparative spirituality of the public conscience, by the esteem it accords and the courtesy it decrees to women.

John Stuart Mill's praise of his wife leads to this passage:

It is as if he had really seen while she lived the infinite substance shadowed in her tender and delicate womanly form; and one yearns afresh for the time when—humanity being lifted to a higher level of life by the prevalence of superior social conditions—every woman will unaffectedly recognize herself as the priestess of a truly Divine worship, and every man shrink aghast consequently from offering upon the altar of her person the incense, now so common, of famished appetite and mercenary lust.

The elder James's use of "moral" to characterize the European scene refers to the appropriators of money and status. (Earlier he had used the convenient term, "moralism," to describe the attitude of the righteous.) It must also be noted that the feminine quality may be uppermost in a man, in particular the artist.

. . . for Art viewed as the distinctively feminine evolution of human activity, in which freedom supplants force, or what is spiritual, individual, private, governs what is natural, common, public—makes Nature as furnishing the material in every work, purely ancillary and subservient to the Artist as furnishing its form, under penalty of defeating the work or rendering it imperfect.

The feminine element in personality—spiritual individuality—is manifest on the plane of appearance in a woman who is not subject to “our gross Adamic servitude,” which, in the novelist, comes to mean the unmarried *American* girl. In America, as the novelist everywhere testifies, the feminine element dominates the masculine; in Europe the case is reversed. In order to avoid terminological confusion I shall call this young girl the promise of life. (The difficulty lies in the fact that the conscience or divine love which makes us aware of our generic nature is not itself common or public but the very fount of individuality or style.)

The international situation is created by the appearance on the European scene of a Charlotte Evans, a Daisy Miller, a Milly Theale, possessed of moral adventurousness and a capacity for sacrificial love. The lack of the first of these qualities led James to object to George Eliot’s heroines in 1866: “she has made no attempt to depict a conscience taking upon itself great and novel responsibilities;” its presence in Howells’ heroines was ground for praise (1875). Howells in his portrayals of “delicate, nervous, emancipated young women, begotten of our institutions and our climate and equipped with an irritable moral consciousness” had “outlined his field.” In a letter, written in 1869, James expressed a dislike of English women in this way: “I revolt from their dreary deathly want of—what shall I call it?—Clover Hooper has it—intellectual grace—Minny Temple has it—moral spontaneity.” My reasons for construing this predilection for a type, which Howells and others had also found useful in fiction, as actual adherence to his father’s view of the symbolic significance of fem-

inity and marriage are partly biographical.

James's beloved cousin, Minny Temple, whom he pays the extraordinary tribute of extended quotation in *Notes of a Son and Brother*, is the acknowledged prototype of Milly Theale in *The Wings of the Dove*. F. O. Matthiessen has lately disclosed that before her death from tuberculosis in 1870 she wrote the novelist that were they not cousins she would ask him to marry her. The letter was received during Henry James's first ecstatic tour of Italy in 1869. It is probable that James construed the tentative proposal as a proffer of the divine love to a man engaged in the selfish appropriation of aesthetic values. Minny's death affected the novelist deeply. He wrote his brother, William, that she had been "translated" from "this changing realm of fact to the steady realm of thought." In the March, 1870, issue of the *Atlantic* the elder James published an article called, "*Is Marriage Holy*," which his son Henry reports he has read "with great enjoyment of its manner and approval of its matter." It is to this combination of circumstances that I attribute the long story, *Traveling Companions*, which appeared (following Minny's death) in the November *Atlantic*, a story in which James sketched the outlines of the system of symbolism which was to serve him for the rest of his life.

In the elder James "marriage" is distinguished from "concubinage" by its purely "social" character. It is the "germ cell" out of which the true society will one day flower. In terms of personality this means that marriage gives the feminine aspect (the spiritual individuality) of the participants ascendancy over the Adam, while concubinage gives free rein to the Adam's lustful selfhood, and is equivalent to appropriation. This distinction (put in softened form for the *Atlantic's* readers) is the basis of the theologian's article. It is also the basis of *Travelling Companions*. The fact that the young writer's symbolism gets out of hand makes this all the more apparent. The machinery is visible, and it creaks.

The task which James seems to have set himself was that of dramatizing the spiritual significance of the two kinds of love, in the guise of a story about a young man's discovery of the values of Italian art under the tutelage of an American girl, whom he marries at the end. The first love-affair, which involves concubinage, is linked with the other, which ends in true marriage, by a symbol recurrent in James—a portrait of the promise of life. This portrait is sold to the hero, Brooke, at the instance of a girl who has suffered a terrible wrong and is dying (apparently of tuberculosis). It bears a close resemblance to Charlotte Evans, the heroine. It is therefore an inversion of the divine love she represents. The heart of the situation is expressed in Charlotte's accusation of Brooke: "It's not with me that you're in love, but with that painted picture." What James has done is to dramatize for his hero the evil consequences of attempting to appropriate the promise of life in the form of an image. To do so would be parallel to enjoying or appropriating the values of Italian art without referring the beauty of all he sees to the divine nature. The appropriation of pictorial values is the opposite of cultivating that sense of style possessed by the lover of the image of life.

The portrait, a Madonna, is an image of Charlotte Evans or an "outward natural representation" of the life or divine love. The man who attempts to appropriate such an image is guilty of spiritual pride—the act is a literal violation of the godhead within his own soul. Brooke does not incur this guilt in his own person. A young stranger who resembles him (and was probably intended to suggest the Dante of the *Vita Nuova*) appears in the dying girl's dream and is later seen by Brooke himself in Florian's Cafe in Venice. In the dream this young man cries out, "Where, ah, where is my blessed lady?" and it seems plain enough that he has lost her deservedly, since he makes a shrine of the portrait. Spiritually he is a benighted Catholic, a member of the bodily church. The two love-affairs are therefore inversions of

one another: Charlotte, the promise of life, corresponds to the portrait; Brooke, the true lover, whose feminine aspect is predominant, corresponds to the young stranger, whose selfhood makes him a gross male Adam. The temptation to appropriate Charlotte to which Brooke almost succumbs indicates that the stranger is not a distinct personality but his other self. In fact, the dying girl and her brother mistake him for the stranger. In the elder James's terms, Brooke when dominated by love sees the real world, an image of his nature. Brooke's "other self," dominated by the Eve, sees an inversion or portrait of the divine love—a reproduction of that very Eve. The one sees God in himself (the Adam); the other sees his selfhood alone (the Eve) and takes it for divine.

Whether the story was Henry James's mode of assuring his cousin that she had mistaken *him*—that he had really been aware of her transcendent worth, it is impossible to say with assurance, although *The Wings of the Dove* suggests that it was. Whatever James's feelings in the matter, it is obvious that the story grew out of Minny's proposal and death, and his father's view of the meaning of marriage. Its importance for this essay is that it links his symbolism with his father's and launches the portrait theme of which he makes such triumphant use in *The Wings of the Dove*.

The portrait theme provides a moral sanction for an aesthetic principle. The aesthetically pictorial is the morally static or selfish. The artist must employ appearances, pictorial values, but if he is truly an artist he will invariably subordinate them to realities, dramatic values. This is in keeping with the elder James's emphasis on the consummatory moral impetus which drives us toward union with God and our fellowmen. Stasis, arrest, fixity are evil. But there is no absolute evil except the attempt to give natural form to that which is not natural but spiritual—the divine love. To do this is to take the letter for the spirit, the portrait for the lady, to be an arch-criminal such as Gil-

bert Osmond or Lord Mark.

James used the relation between pictorial and dramatic values to assert the moral primacy of the latter in the story called *The Real Thing*. The artist of the story is an illustrator whose pictures have reference to dramatic situations. The novel he has in hand involves society people and he makes the mistake of hiring two poverty-stricken aristocrats as models. As models they turn out to be intractable—limited, fixed, pictorial values. He replaces them with a stray young Italian and a cockney girl who have style, an ability to project themselves in dramatic situations, which is flatly opposed to being an aristocrat, a licensed image of conformity. The act of representation is seen to be an unceasing invocation of that which gives form. It is an influx of the divine nature which creates the "ideal thing," and the point of the story is the distinction between identity and individuality. The two sets of models are morally, as well as pictorially, inversions of one another. The moral conclusion is precisely that of *Madame de Mauves*. These two stories compose an interesting parallel in James's use of the device of inverting commonplace assumptions. In the first the assumption is that the "real thing" is superior to a makeshift; in the second the assumption is that the libertine is morally inferior to a righteous person. (The apparent sinner in *Madame de Mauves* is the husband; the real sinner is his American wife who renounces her spiritual birthright for the identity conferred by a caste society.)

The best instance in James's works of the relation between the portrait theme and pictorial values is *The Author of Beltraffio*. Mark Ambient, the worldly man turned artist, is one of the writer's triumphant ironies. His attempt to invert reality and make "things" prior to consciousness is a transcendent miserliness. He is comically frank about what he does.

Perhaps I care too much for beauty—I don't know, I doubt if a poor devil *can*; I delight in it, I adore it, I think of it continually, I try to produce it, to reproduce it.

James is here careful to use "reproduce" rather than "represent," for what Ambient does is to appropriate nature's "firm and bright" forms. This demonic author is wholly unable to understand his demonic wife, who is as righteous as he is greedy. She ought to tolerate his search for beauty for she is, or was, a beautiful object.

She's always afraid of it, always on her guard. And she's so pretty, too, herself! Don't you think she's lovely? She was at any rate when we married. At that time I wasn't aware of the difference I speak of—I thought it all came to the same thing: in the end, as they say.

It will come to the same thing in the end. For in the end greed and righteousness are but modes of appropriation. The struggle of these parents over the child, Dolcino (whom the narrator sees as "an orphan or a changeling"), is a struggle which can end in only one way, that is, the destruction of the symbol of their social selves. The attempt to appropriate the child makes him a portrait—a dead image of himself. The Ambients have destroyed the symbol of their unity in marriage—their conscience—and condemned themselves to "death," that is damnation through spiritual pride. In the elder James death has no other meaning.

The Figure in the Carpet, like *The Real Thing*, is a parable illustrating the relationship between reproduction and identity on the one hand, and representation and spiritual individuality on the other. The great novelist's admirers edit a magazine called *The Middle*; one of them has written a novel called *Deep Down*, which is described as "a great hole in a sandy desert"—their whole attitude toward literature is that of the appropriator—a quest for density and fixity, for the "real thing." In this they recall Mark Ambient, whose aim the narrator of *The Author of Beltraffio* describes in this way: "To sink your shaft deep and polish the plate through which people look into it—that's what your work consists of" The figure shows that Ambient is not one who represents; he is an exhibitor of natural forms. The narrator of *The Figure in the Carpet* observes that Vereker doesn't want to

give the show away because he enjoys the spectacle of the critical impasse, "our density was a thing too perfect in its way to touch." James's most delightful figure emerges at the end. The narrator, who has previously noted that he and his fellows are confined to "literary circles" ("I have sufficiently intimated that it was only in such circles we were all constructed to revolve"), concludes with this characterization of himself and his companion in the search for Vereker's "figure": "I may say that today as victims of unappeased desire there isn't a pin to choose between us." These magpies of literature, whom Vereker describes as "little demons of subtlety," inhabit Dante's Limbo, where, without hope, they live in desire. James made an extensive use of characters who may be described as Virgilian intelligences acquisitive of knowledge and incapable of love. Only a person whose love is selfless can appreciate the intention of the "figure." Corvick and his wife gain the knowledge they seek—that is, in the form of an image—and die for precisely the reason that Mark Ambient and his wife die. By reducing the "figure" to a possession, an image, they violate conscience. *The Figure in the Carpet* suggests how important James considered what I have called the portrait theme. But a second theme of even greater dramatic power remains to be discussed.

The Other Self

The portrait theme and the theme of the other self represent the extreme possibilities of human experience. According to the elder James the limiting conditions of the present phase of mankind's consciousness are self-love and brotherly love. We may become devils now by seizing upon an image of the divine love and making the self absolute. We may also complete the tragic process of self-confrontation and realize that spiritual quality (or style) of which we are capable. In either case we lose our "identity" by transcending the extreme. At present most men do not, while on earth, manage to cast out the self. But the elder

James believed that the process of history was hastening to an end, and that the New Jerusalem would soon arise in America. In the meantime each man is judged according to his desires. What appears good to the hero of *The Great Good Place* may not appear good to another. The theologian quotes this observation from Swedenborg: "The good appertaining to man makes his heaven, so that every man's heaven is exactly what his good is."

But the novelist was no Howells. For him the drama lay at the extremes and his greatest works all treat of them. He tried his hand at presenting the experience of regeneration in *Travelling Companions* in 1870, and made his climactic use of the theme in *The Golden Bowl*. The first thing to be noted about this experience is its ambivalent character. At the moment one takes possession of the world as an image of one's nature—a moment of great exaltation—one is beset by fear. For it is at that moment that the Eve, the other self, is seen. More precisely, it is at that moment that the Eve becomes the *other* self—a spectacle of horror to be encountered and worsted. When engaged in appropriating the shows of appearance one after the other, or in accumulating more and more scientific information, we never see the significance of the act itself. But when we cast out the self what we have been doing appears to us in its absolute form. It is no longer the Eve with which our conscience has been struggling. It is that which the Eve becomes when appropriation is of the whole, that is, of God—it is Death.

The guilt of appropriation is obvious to the man whose world is no longer ordered by his desire for money, aesthetic "values," status or some other ruling passion. His new love is inclusive; his old love was exclusive. The Eve isolates us in the way suggested by this quotation from *The Tragic Muse*: "If the affection that isolates and simplifies its object may be distinguished from the affection that seeks communications and contacts for it, Julia Dallow's was quite of the encircling, not to say the narrowing sort."

Whenever we encounter a character beset by love and terror in the act of taking possession of a wealth of felt values—a character afraid of himself—we have an instance of the theme. The following passage from *Travelling Companions* is one of a number which suggest an ambivalent attitude toward the splendid yet tainted European past. It is part of the record of Brooke's stay in Rome.

But I remember with especial delight certain long lonely rides on the Campagna. The weather was perfect. Nature seemed only to slumber, ready to wake far on the hither side of wintry death. From time to time, after a passionate gallop, I would pull up my horse on the slope of some pregnant mound and embrace with the ecstasy of quickened senses the tragical beauty of the scene; strain my ear to the soft low silence, pity the dark dishonored plain, watch the heavens come rolling down in tides of light, and breaking in waves of fire against the massive stillness of temples and tombs. The aspect of all this sunny solitude and haunted vacancy used to fill me with a mingled sense of exaltation and dread. There were moments when my fancy swept that vast funereal desert with passionate curiosity and desire, moments when it felt only its potent sweetness and its high historic charm. But there were other times when the air seemed so heavy with the exhalation of unburied death, so bright with sheeted ghosts, that I turned short about and galloped back to the city.

When Brooke next encounters Charlotte he is cured of his taste for the picturesque and regards his old love as "profane," his new love as "sacred."

More than forty years later in *A Small Boy and Others* James treated the theme of the other self as a personal experience. He is recalling his first visits to the Louvre as a child: "The beginning in short was with Géricault and David, but it went on and on and slowly spread; so that one's stretched, one's even strained perceptions, one's discoveries and extensions piece by piece come back, on the great premises, almost as so many explorations of the house of life, so many circlings and hoverings round the image of the world." The "image of the world," I take to be Adam or earth. It recalls Blake's Albion, and William Troy's conclusion

about James's religious allegiance: ". . . And, in that case, his altar—what would it be but the sometimes splendid and exultant, sometimes mangled and ignoble, body of humanity stretched out in imagination in time and space?" James's account of the Galerie d'Apollon ("the house of life") and of the nightmare of which it was the scene I quote in full, because it is crucial for an understanding of his symbolism. He has been speaking of a dawning sense of the "forms" of style.

It was as if they had gathered there into a vast deafening chorus; I shall never forget how—speaking, that is, for my own sense—they filled those vast halls with the influence rather of some complicated sound, diffused and reverberant, than of such visibilities as one could directly deal with. To distinguish among these, in the charged and colored and confounding air, was difficult—it discouraged and defied; which was doubtless why my impression originally best entertained was that of those magnificent parts of the great gallery simply not inviting us to distinguish. They only arched over us in the wonder of their endless golden riot and relief, figured and flourished in perpetual revolution, breaking into great high hung circles and symmetries of squandered picture, opening into deep outward embrasures that threw off the rest of monumental Paris somehow as a told story, a sort of wrought effect or bold ambiguity for a vista, and yet held it there, at every point, as a vast bright gage, even at moments a felt adventure, of experience. This comes to saying that in those beginnings I felt myself most happily cross that bridge over to Style constituted by the wondrous Galerie d'Apollon, drawn out for me as a long but assured initiation and seeming to form with its supreme coved ceiling and inordinately shining parquet a prodigious tube or tunnel through which I inhaled little by little, that is again and again, a general sense of *glory*. The glory meant ever so many things at once, not only beauty and art and supreme design, but history and fame and power, the world in fine raised to the richest and noblest expression. The world there was at the same time, by an odd extension or intensification, the local present fact, to my small imagination of the Second Empire, which was (for my notified consciousness) new and queer and perhaps even wrong, but on the spot so amply elegant and radiant that it took to itself, took under its protection with a splendour of insolence, the state and ancience of the whole scene, profiting thus, to one's dim historic vision, confusedly though it might be, by the unparalleled luxury and variety of its heritage.

But who shall count the sources at which an intense young fancy (when a young fancy *is* intense) capriciously, absurdly drinks?—so that the effect is, in twenty connections, that of a love-philtre or fear-philtre which fixes for the senses their supreme symbol of the fair or the strange. The Galerie d'Apollon became for years what I can only term a splendid scene of things, even of the quite irrelevant or, as might be, almost unworthy; and I recall to this hour, with the last vividness, what a precious part it played for me, and exactly by that continuity of honour, on my awaking, in a summer dawn many years later, to the fortunate, the instantaneous recovery and capture of the most appalling yet most admirable nightmare of my life. The climax of this extraordinary experience—which stands alone for me as a dream-adventure founded in the deepest, quickest, clearest act of cogitation and comparison, act indeed of life-saving energy, as well as in unutterable fear—was the sudden pursuit, through an open door, along a high saloon, of a just dimly descried figure that retreated in terror before my rush and dash (a glare of inspired reaction from irresistible but shameful dread,) out of the room I had a moment before been desperately, and all the more abjectly, defending by the push of my shoulder against hard pressure on lock and bar from the other side. The lucidity, not to say the sublimity, of the crisis had consisted of the great thought that I, in my appalled state, was probably still more appalling than the awful agent, creature or presence, whatever he was, whom I had guessed, in the suddenest wild start from sleep, the sleep within my sleep, to be making for my place of rest. The triumph of my impulse, perceived in a flash as I acted on it by myself at a bound, forcing the door outward, was the grand thing, but the great point of the whole was the wonder of my final recognition. Routed, dismayed, the tables turned upon him by my so surpassing him for straight aggression and dire intention, my visitant was already but a diminished spot in the long perspective, the tremendous, glorious hall, as I say, over the far-gleaming floor of which, cleared for the occasion of its great line of priceless vitrines down the middle, he sped for *his* life, while a great storm of thunder and lightning played through the deep embrasures of high windows at the right. The lightning that revealed the retreat revealed also the wondrous place and, by the same amazing play, my young imaginative life in it of long before, the sense of which, deep within me, had kept it whole, preserved it to this thrilling use; for what in the world were the deep embrasures and the so polished floor but those of the Galerie d'Apollon of my childhood? The "scene of something" I had vaguely then felt it? Well I might, since it was to be the scene of that immense hallucination.

The state of innocence, the dream of the sleeping Adam before he is awakened by the Eve, is here described as a "complicated sound, diffused and reverberant" which does not invite discrimination and appropriation. It is "a general sense of *glory*." The elder James described the Adam before the appearance of the Eve as "a mere dimpled nursling of the skies." The infant psyche has a "general sense of glory" while it cleaves to its parents, the divine wisdom and the divine love. Swedenborg defines "glory" as follows: "*Glory*, in the Word, when it is used concerning the Lord, signifies divine truth united to divine good." What James has done in this passage is to recapitulate the history of mankind, and identify it with the experience of the regenerate man. When we leave our "parents" the period of struggle between conscience and the self begins. We enact the history of mankind. The close of this period, which James called "the middle years," is signalized by paroxysms of guilt and fear. The European past so vividly present to Brooke on the Campagna is *his* past. The American steps ashore in Europe and says in effect: "Look what I have gone and done!" Or, to put it another way, you cannot take possession of the world as an image of your nature without acknowledging what that nature has *been*. To do so makes us love mankind and fear ourselves. We awake a second time "many years later," as James says, to discover that it was the other self which robbed us of our "general" sense of our divine nature. We banish the self and achieve a qualified and distinctive participation in that nature—spiritual individuality or style. The house of life, originally a chaos, become a cosmos. We are (to use another of James's figures) born in New York, the region of reality; live our middle years in London, the region of the phenomenal, and finally effect a marriage of the two. For this reason the New York Edition of James's works is named for the first city and illustrated chiefly with pictures of the second.

The most useful illustrations I have found of James's use of the theme of the other self in fiction occur in *The Jolly Corner*

and *The Sense of the Past*. In both cases the other self actually appears to the hero, and a representative of the divine love and a house symbolizing the image of the world figure in the story. (The elder James made incessant use of the house as a symbol of the soul.) Many other cases in which a house is a focus for drama will occur to the reader. The two works I have mentioned also serve to relate the theme of the other self to redemption, for in both *The Jolly Corner* and (if James's notes are to be trusted) *The Sense of the Past* the heroine takes upon herself the guilt of appropriation, that is, subjects herself to the fury of the dispossessed Eve. James's own possession of the "wondrous" Galerie d'Apollon is sanctioned in the same way. He writes, that is, "under the descent of the god" who assumes the guilt of "the middle years."

The Descent of the God

In this and the following section I undertake a provisional interpretation of the last three novels James completed. Although I have probably made some errors of fact and emphasis, I believe that my account is accurate enough to initiate a reappraisal of James's moral temper. The titles of *The Wings of the Dove* and *The Golden Bowl* suggest quite directly the themes which these works treat; the first has to do with the coming of the Holy Ghost, and the second with the apocalypse symbolized by the breaking of the golden bowl and the loosening of the silver cord. In the first work Merton Densher is redeemed and reconciled to the divinity; in the second the divinity signals the completion of the process of redemption and the coming of the divine-natural humanity by "marrying" Prince Amerigo and Charlotte Stant, who constitute mankind.

The Wings of the Dove is a poem about the struggle of the two loves, the love of self and the love of humanity, for the soul of mankind. From the point of view of Henry James it cannot be called an allegory, because the term implies a system of symbols

which limit each other, a static set of values. The work has a closer resemblance to the morality play, but to call it that would be to neglect the heart of James's achievement. Although it is an account of the descent of the redeemer into hell, her struggle with the demons over man's soul, and her ultimate triumph, the hell is in fact London, the redeemer is in fact a woman, and the circumstances are those of our very lives. James's poetic and dramatic achievement depends on his father's assumption that "the truth which incurs humiliation on our behalf" literally subjects itself to the conditions of human life. It is clear that James made a selection, dictated by doctrinal considerations, from the facts of London life. But any novelist is so much a thinker. The point is that James's marriage of appearance and reality (using the terms as his father used them) has passed for life, and what, for the reader, passes for life can hardly be called something else. If James "has so endeared himself" is it not because, like his father, he has "kept together his stream of thought however transcendent, and the stream of life however humanised"? We may object to the writer's morality, but we cannot meaningfully condemn him as unreal.

The preceding paragraph must serve as an apology for a somewhat mechanical outline of the "spiritual" aspect of the action in *The Wings of the Dove*. Milly Theale, representative of the divine love, is burdened, like Christ, with the presumptions of mankind about her character and destiny. She comes from New York which appears to be the seat of wealth and power. Yet Milly is a wholly spiritual being, the very reverse of the frantic arrogance which had erected New York's tall buildings. For the elder James the rising tide of wealth and wickedness in 19th Century America was a sign that a prophecy overheard by Swedenborg would be fulfilled—that America would become the site of the New Jerusalem. "Moral dynamics" demonstrated that a country in which the men had instituted a saturnalia of greed, and (as the novelist remarks in *The American Scene*) left everything

of importance to women, was approaching an apocalyptic show-down. Milly therefore calls herself the "survivor of a general wreck"—a spiritual deposit produced by the moral electrolysis of American society. She has power and is not arrogant; she is wealthy and doesn't show it. Not a shred of appearance, density or deceit hangs about her—she is style incarnate.

Milly is accompanied in her descent upon Europe by Susan Shepherd Stringham. Susan represents the intelligence of New England purged of its righteousness. She gives up the composition of stories whose heroines have an "appetite for motive" and follows Milly without consulting her Boston friends who "would only darken counsel." She has succeeded in subordinating New England's faith to New York's charity: her intellect is at the service of her inclusive love. Milly, who is about to subject herself to the conditions of human life, needs Susan, who has been the schoolfellow of a personification of the senses (or greed), Mrs. Lowder, to act as liaison with the world of appearance, and to serve as Merton Densher's conscience after his redemption.

The difficulty of describing the forces within the personality of Merton Densher (mankind) is analogous to that of making a conceptual description of personality as seen by Freud. Densher is morally in motion, and his relationship to the forces about (or within) him is therefore dynamic. My discussion of the portrait theme and the theme of the other self has made the reader familiar with the limiting conditions of the consciousness of the natural man. In *The Wings of the Dove* these extremes are represented by Milly Theale, life, and Lord Mark, death. Densher who is first redeemed and then reborn possessed of a style or spiritual individuality, does not of his own volition transcend either extreme. Instead he moves forward flanked by these polar opposites, impelled toward death by his selfhood, and toward life by his conscience. In the end, the divine love presents him with a forced option. He must abandon his identity or balance between self-love and brotherly love. He must take

Milly's whole fortune—all the kingdoms of the earth—and die utterly, or reject it all and live wholly under the dominion of brotherly love. But Densher regenerate is not yet identified with the divine love. He is a spontaneous person, an artist in life. The process by which the fullness of God's nature becomes manifest in society is dramatized in *The Golden Bowl*, in which the marriage Densher tries to bring about at the end of *The Wings of the Dove* is consummated.

The mistress of Lancaster Gate, Mrs. Lowder, is "Britannia of the Market-Place," the spirit of bourgeois possessiveness. Her aim is not status but money. Her sin is worldliness. Dependent upon her is the Eve, Kate Croy, who feeds upon the shows of appearance which Mrs. Lowder controls. The other familiar of the household is Lord Mark, self-righteousness incarnate. It is the aim of Mrs. Condrip, Milly's sister, to marry her to Lord Mark or Death, and thus make absolute the power of the bodily church, which Mrs. Condrip represents. Kate and Mrs. Condrip are daughters of Beëlzebub, father of lies, for the self is the lie that deludes the individual, and the church is the representative lie of society at large. Lionel Croy is therefore finitude, an inversion of Milly's physician, Sir Luke Strett, who represents the divine wisdom, just as Kate is an inversion of Milly herself.

I have not space here to interpret the novel in detail. Instead, I shall deal with James's use of the two themes discussed in the earlier sections of this essay. Milly must, like Jesus Christ, subject herself to all the evils of nature and society. She plunges to that center of density, Lancaster Gate. (The rewards and dangers which confront the ambitious commentator on James may be illustrated by his use of this name here. In *Paradise Lost* Sin and Death live at the "gate" of hell. "Lancaster" is of course opposed to New "York," and the colors of the roses match the virtues involved, for faith is traditionally symbolized by white, and is the virtue claimed by the appropriators, while red is for charity, the virtue represented by Milly.) At Mrs. Lowder's

dinner party Milly subjects herself to greed. Those about her conceive of life as purely acquisitive. She is the shining morsel of the London season, and she allows herself to be appropriated. In this scene she "turns a corner," that is, begins her ascent from the depths bearing Densher.

It is in the scene laid in a second hell, Matcham, that the portrait theme recurs. Those Milly meets in this "great historic house" are the morally dead who people high society. Lord Mark is not and cannot be aware, as Kate is, that Milly cannot be moved save by love. Believing that he can tempt her with the kingdoms of the earth he makes an offer and is refused.

The Bronzino scene has been recognized as one of James's greatest triumphs on the "realistic" plane. It is quite as successful on the plane of "reality." Milly has been sitting with Mrs. Lowder, sipping iced coffee, and taking in "an assault of reminders that this largeness of style was the sign of *appointed* felicity." Encompassed, like Melville's Bulkington, by a sea of alien dangers, she comes up to and beyond the occasion by praising Kate Croy: "She knew people, and people knew her, and she was the handsomest thing there—this last a declaration made by Milly, in a sort of soft mid-summer madness, a straight skylark-flight of charity, to Aunt Maud." Her apotheosis is at hand. Lord Mark, who has been circling about, approaches and asks Milly's permission to show her a portrait which (in his eyes) strongly resembles her. When they stand before the Bronzino she senses his unspoken words: "Do let a fellow who isn't a fool take care of you a little." They recall Mrs. Lowder's desire that she and Kate prosper together, and the "kind eyes" of the throng she has passed through on her way to the room in which the portrait hangs. All these people want to care for her, but their care would be for the very thing she is not, rather than what she is. She stands before the very thing she is not—an image of the divine love, whose "slightly Michael-angelesque squareness" recalls the boyish outlines of Kate Croy and Charlotte Stant.

Once more things melted together—the beauty and the history and the facility and the splendid mid-summer glow; it was a sort of magnificent maximum, the pink dawn of an apotheosis coming so curiously soon The lady in question, at all events, with her slightly Michael-angelesque squareness, her eyes of other days, her full lips, her long neck, her recorded jewels, her brocaded and wasted reds, was a very great personage—only unaccompanied by a joy. And she was dead, dead, dead. Milly recognized her exactly in words that had nothing to do with her. “I shall never be better than this.”

This is a striking instance of James’s doubleness. The reader unaware of the figure in the carpet is led to believe that Milly is recognizing the pathos of her last experience of “*appointed felicity*.” But the source of Milly’s suffering is quite the reverse. The divinity can do no more, *can be no better*, for she confronts her antithesis and is confounded with it by her suitor, Death. The theological circumstances are those which, according to the elder James, surrounded Christ. Milly might well say, “Woman, what have I to do with thee?” for the presumption that she wants earthly dominion and will accept Mark’s heritage of status is what enables her to demonstrate her utter selflessness and in this way prepare to exercise the office of a redeemer. The American girl need no longer acknowledge herself a daughter of Eve.

In the moral geography of *The Wings of the Dove* London houses the hells, and Venice where the sea marries the land, the infinite meets the finite, is earth, the scene of redemption. Milly’s palace, a house of life, is her world. Densher’s comment on her refusal to leave it indicates the nature of the struggle taking place in his soul.

She wouldn’t let him call it keeping quiet, for she insisted that her palace—with all its romance of art and history—had set up round her a whirlwind of suggestion that never dropped for an hour. It wasn’t therefore, within such walls, confinement, it was the freedom of all the centuries; in respect to which Densher granted good-humoredly that they were then blown together, she and he, as much as she liked through space.

The figure Densher uses appears to be borrowed from the Paolo and Francesca episode in the *Inferno*. Dante's lovers are punished by the very desire that had in the beginning beguiled them—they are blown about by the gusts of a passion from which they are never free. It is as the victim of lust that Densher, who is shortly to appropriate Kate Croy, speaks here. Milly has "the freedom of all the centuries" for a reason opposed to the one Densher suggests. Her love is comprehensive, not exclusive.

Kate forces Densher to take action to maintain his identity. In the attempt to preserve the balance between self-love and brotherly love which constitutes the consciousness of the natural man he forces her to sleep with him and acquires the "treasure" of memory which suffuses his rooms. But the very action to which his selfhood has provoked him makes him aware of a curious split in his awareness. The elder James often described the limiting conditions of consciousness as man's "dove" and "serpent" natures. Densher traverses, so to speak, the moral distance between these extremes when he goes from his rooms, which are now (like the house of Mrs. Lowder, the serpent) filled with possessions, to the palace of the "dove." He becomes aware that Susan Shepherd will somehow be of service to him. This symbolizes his subordination of intellect to love. He has acquired a conscience.

The theme of the other self is employed following Lord Mark's betrayal of the plot to Milly. It is not surprising that James did not reprint *Travelling Companions*, for Densher, like Brooke, confronts his other self at Florian's Cafe, and the scene has exactly the same symbolic significance. In short, Mark provides a vision of the evil Densher had contemplated, and the fact that Densher can see him is evidence of his redemption. "The weather had changed, the rain was ugly, the wind wicked, the sea impossible, *because* of Lord Mark. It was because of him *a fortiori* that the palace was closed." Thereafter Densher comes to fear himself. His Eve has brought him to the very verge of dying through spiritual pride.

Nothing in his predicament was so odd as that, incontestably afraid of himself, he was not afraid of Sir Luke. He had an impression, which he clung to, based on a previous taste of the visitor's company, that *he* would somehow let him off. The truth about Milly perched on his shoulders and sounded in his tread, became by the fact of his presence the name and the form, for the time, of everything in the place

Sir Luke, "physician of souls," is the Word, or the truth informed by love. Under his ministry Densher prepares for his rebirth on Christmas. I neglect the end of the work in order to discuss the relationship of the last three novels and the "spiritual" significance of *The Golden Bowl*.

The Programme of a Charity Performance

In *The Nature of Evil* (1855) the elder James called for a new conception of the nature and ends of creation in these words: "What is palpably wanted therefore is a *spiritual* cosmology which shall transfigure the literal or Mosaic one with the lustre of Christian truth, and from a gaunt unhandsome skeleton convert it into a graceful and glowing form of life." He was not thinking of a poem, but of a dynamic conception of the cosmos, but the sentence describes his son's last books admirably.

The Ambassadors, *The Wings of the Dove* and *The Golden Bowl* comprise a "spiritual cosmology" which may (with due regard to both reality and appearance) be called the divine novel. They deal respectively with the three principal churches of our history, the Jewish, the Christian, and the New Church. The "ambassadors" are the prophets, whose function, as the elder James believed, was to demonstrate conclusively that neither persons nor peoples could be saved by righteousness, or any system which affirmed that there were essential differences between individuals. In *The Ambassadors* the "pinched and wintry Congregationalism" of New England stands for Old Testament righteousness. Its chief representative, Lambert Strether, comes not too late, but too soon, to live. His conception of consciousness is that of the

appropriator, who believes that the bowl of selfhood is unbreakable. I quote from his famous speech in Gloriani's garden.

The affair—I mean the affair of life—couldn't no doubt have been different for me; for it's, at the best, a tin mould, either fluted and embossed with ornamental excrescences, or else smooth and dreadfully plain, into which, a helpless jelly, one's consciousness is poured—so that one "takes" the form, as the great cook says, and is more or less compactly held by it; one lives, in fine, as one can.

What this means is that Strether feeds on phenomenal delusions from beginning to end. He has no opportunity to confront his selfhood, for he is never willing to abandon his righteousness, and departs declaring that he wants nothing for himself—which, from the point of view of the elder James, is equivalent to saying that he wants everything—all the moral credit available. *The Wings of the Dove* logically follows an account of the failure of the Law or Jewish Church to cope with evil, since it is a poem in which Densher is redeemed and constrained to accept the divine love; and to it, in turn, *The Golden Bowl* is a logical sequel, since it deals with the coming of the divine-natural humanity (the New Church)—or the "marriage" of the infinite and the finite.

The familiar theme of the other self is used early in *The Golden Bowl*. Adam Verver, the fabulously wealthy American, while musing about his past in his country house (which contains the greatest collection of works of art in existence) recalls "the sudden hour that had transformed his life," in a passage strongly reminiscent of that about the Galerie d'Apollon in *A Small Boy and Others*.

His "peak in Darien" was the sudden hour that had transformed his life, the hour of his perceiving with a mute inward gasp akin to the low moan of apprehensive passion that a world was left him to conquer and that he might conquer it if he tried. It had been a turning of the page of the book of life—as if a leaf long inert had moved at a touch and, eagerly reversed, had made such a stir of the air as sent up into his face the very breath of the Golden Isles. To rifle the Golden Isles had become on the spot

the business of his future, and with the sweetness of it— what was most wondrous of all—still more even in the thought than in the act. The thought was that of the affinity of Genius, or at least of Taste, with something in himself—with the dormant intelligence of which he had thus almost violently become aware and that affected him as changing by a mere revolution of the screw his whole intellectual plane. He was somehow equal with the great seers, the invokers and encouragers of beauty—and he didn't after all perhaps dangle so far below the great producers and creators.

He reflects that he has reached his "peak" by a difficult road, but "the years of darkness had been needed to render possible the years of light." He sees himself now "quite at the top of his hill of difficulty, the tall sharp spiral round which he had begun to wind his ascent at the age of twenty, and the apex of which was a platform looking down, if one would, on the kingdoms of the earth and with standing-room for but half-a-dozen others."

Adam Verver has come into possession of the image of life without, apparently, confronting the image of death, the other self. But that encounter is, as the reader will see, simply deferred, not avoided. An explanation of the complex figure of the "peak," "screw," or "hill of difficulty" he has ascended in "the year of darkness" will dispose of this apparent anomaly. Let the reader imagine himself rotating a screw clockwise, with the head held downwards, until the point sinks level with his fingers. The screw itself is God projected in natural forms, Adam or earth. Man is pictured as ascending the spiral of the thread until, with the last inclination of the plane (the screw is an application of the principle of the inclined plane) he stands on the "platform" at the point. The effect of the last inclination of the plane is a complete reversal of man's point of view, a turning of the page, which enables him to view the whole of his nature ("the kingdoms of the earth") at once. He realizes that what he had thought was other than himself is but a projection (a magic lantern image) of his nature. The significance of the act of ascending the screw may be understood if the reader will think of the selfhood as driving

us in ever-increasing weariness and frustration to mount the hill and exhaust the possibilities of science or acquisition.

So far I have spoken as if man were the sole source of motion. But the figure combines the descent of God into man with the ascent of man to God. For man, although he appears to be mounting the screw, is actually stationary, and the energy which turns the screw is supplied by God. (James had noticed that when one rotates a screw as I have suggested the eye follows the thread to the point and the screw *appears* to be rising while it is *really* sinking.) Man reaches the "platform" at the moment when the creator has wholly sunk himself in man, has made man his equal and his fellow. From the "platform" the divine-natural humanity, a union of man and God, surveys its essence.

Adam Verver is therefore both God and man. He has in fact been a millionaire (the polar opposite of Milly Theale) whose acquisitiveness had extended to the whole of nature, and, in the course of his ascent, had engrossed all phenomena. But as he stands he is indistinguishable from the divine wisdom which is the knowledge of Adam or earth. Yet he now fears himself. "He feared not only danger — he feared the idea of danger, or in other words feared hauntedly himself." The only conceivable circumstance which could lead the divine wisdom to fear himself would be a divorce from the divine love. Maggie Verver, the selfless principle, is prior and primary in God's nature. Wisdom deprived of love fears the delusion of selfishness.

Maggie Verver has married Prince Amerigo, the "world" or finitude, and seeks to become *his* conscience. The silver cord must be temporarily loosened. Maggie puts the situation to her father in this way: "It was as if you couldn't be in the market when you were married to *me*. Or rather as if I kept people off, innocently, by being married to you. Now that I'm married to somebody else you're, as in consequence, married to nobody. Therefore you may be married to anybody, to everybody." The marriage to "everybody" takes place; the divine wisdom is united

with the principle of selfhood, Charlotte Stant. But the two "marriages" will remain formalities unless the liaison of the sleeping or chaotic Adam, Amerigo, with his Eve can be broken off. When this happens the divine love will gain access to his consciousness, seat herself in the labyrinth and lead Amerigo to fear Charlotte. When Amerigo who is *thought* to have discovered the new world actually does so Charlotte will be deprived of all phenomena, and forced to accept an inversion of phenomenal knowledge, the divine wisdom. The forces at work in this situation may be labelled in this way:

		GOD	
AMERICA		INFINITE	
<i>Divine Wisdom</i>		<i>Divine Love</i>	
Adam Verver		Maggie Verver	
		LORD	
AMERICAN CITY		"MARRIAGE"	
(NEW JERUSALEM)			
		<i>Divine-Natural Humanity</i>	
		Principino	
		MAN	
EUROPE		FINITE	
<i>Nature</i>	<i>Senses</i>	<i>Intellect</i>	<i>Selfhood</i>
Amerigo	Colonel	Fanny	Charlotte
	Assingham	Assingham	Stant
	(FOOT)	(STEM)	(CUP)

The phrase which Adam Verver uses to describe his museum (temple of the muses) which is to rise in the New Jerusalem (American City) characterizes the result of the interaction of these forces. The museum is to exhibit "the programme of a charity performance." The "programme" is the scheme or structure of the creation—the divine wisdom; "charity" is the divine love, and the "performance" is the "use" (the third person of

the trinity according to Swedenborg) made of these two, that is, creation and regeneration, or, to use the terms implied by the name "Verver," turn and return. (The "Lord" or "God-Man" is the divine-natural humanity.)

The weak link in the liaison between Amerigo and Charlotte is Fanny Assingham, the representative of the church (existent human institutions) and the phenomenal understanding. Fanny must invert reality or (as far as she knows) perish. Maggie has subjected herself to Catholicism for Amerigo's sake and Adam allows it to appear that he is a Catholic. Fanny therefore thinks that *she* has "made" the marriages. As long as the two marriages appear proper but are in fact masks for adultery the church is safe, and Amerigo will remain dependent upon her for experience. The only way in which Fanny can be led to her undoing, therefore, is through her desire to preserve the appearances which constitute the phenomenal form of nature and society. This will help to explain the episode of the golden bowl, a bowl made of crystal, covered with gilt, and marred by a flaw. Fanny breaks this bowl because it is evidence that the apparently happy marriages are failures. If this becomes known her occupation will be gone, for everything else in the world can now be explained by love and wisdom. The situation parallels all the others we have examined whose last phenomenal fact is the awful other self.

When Adam Verver, in a passage of delightful cosmic comedy, grows rhapsodic over his son-in-law, he describes him as a "flawless crystal" because the world is in reality a perfect image of God which, when filled with the divine love, becomes a divine man. This is the real bowl—"the bowl as it was to have been." The bowl which Fanny breaks is an inversion of the one Adam sees. It is the selfhood filled by the shows of appearance, and it rests on the base of the grovelling senses joined to the stem of the intellect.

Can wisdom be put in a silver rod
Or love in a golden bowl?

Blake's question is here answered in the negative. This "rod" or stem is an inversion of wisdom, and this bowl is an inversion of love. In an effort to save the liaison between Amerigo and Charlotte Fanny breaks the bowl, a symbol of that very liaison, and thus demonstrates its transitory character. The flaw symbolizes the self-defeating nature of intellect. The phenomenal understanding (or the church) is made to destroy itself by making mankind aware of the nullity of phenomenal knowledge. Fanny can no longer govern Amerigo because she no longer knows anything.

When Amerigo enters just after Fanny has smashed the bowl, he asks what she *means* by doing so. What she means to do is to preserve a lie—what she does is assert a truth. Man is and has always been a sinner and what has made him so is his selfhood which has bound him to the intellect and the senses. To see this situation whole is to see the other self, and to become afraid. Amerigo standing in the same room with this symbol of his selfhood and Maggie is mankind suddenly endowed with a conscience. Maggie reflects on the fact of his sudden need of her:

It had operated within her now to the last intensity, her glimpse of the precious truth that by her helping him, helping him to help himself, as it were, she should help him to help *her*. Hadn't she fairly got into his labyrinth with him?—wasn't she indeed in the very act of placing herself there for him at its centre and core, whence, on that definite orientation and by an instinct all her own, she might securely guide him out of it?

By another ironic turn Fanny is made to realize that she has lost when, at the ball, Amerigo disregards the social mores; fails, that is, to *keep up appearances* by allowing himself to be seen with Charlotte. This amounts to an acknowledgement of his guilt, and is a blow fatal to the church.

There follows the struggle between conscience and the self. Maggie takes up the burden of maintaining appearances for Amerigo. She puts herself in Charlotte's power as Milly had put

herself in Kate's and, finally, in Lork Mark's. Maggie lies, goes into "society," and, in general, bears the fury of Amerigo's dispossessed and enraged selfhood. Charlotte forces her, as Lord Mark had forced Milly, to view an inversion or image of herself through the windows of her own living-room. This amounts to dying for Amerigo's sake, for in him such an act would constitute spiritual evil, an appropriation of the godhead within. In short, Maggie becomes Amerigo's conscience, and her fear of Charlotte is Amerigo's fear of himself. When Amerigo casts off his Eve Maggie is freed. Her aspect of the marriage of the infinite and finite has been consummated. Charlotte, however, is still at large. She is in search of something to feed the delusion of phenomenal identity. There is nothing left. Her hunger puts her in the power of the divine wisdom who leads her off in a silken halter to be schooled in reality. This consummates the other aspect of the marriage.

When, at the end of the book, the Principino trots into the room, the seven aspects of man and the three aspects of God are seen to be one: the divine-natural humanity. (The third aspect of God, the divine "use," does not appear on the diagram above. It may be thought of as the energy that turns the screw.) James symbolizes this union of the one in seven, man, with the one in three, God, by placing the date 1713 above the gate through which Maggie and Adam pass when walking at Fawns. This "gate" is the entrance into the New Jerusalem after the symbolism of Swedenborg. To revert to an earlier figure, when the Principino enters "the half-a-dozen others" have finally joined Adam Verver on his "vertiginous peak." No aspect of human nature has been discarded or denied. The pagoda set in Maggie's garden a tall and empty symbol of selfhood, has been overthrown, and the Prince, a Palladian palace, has become "the house of life," for, as the elder James puts it, "man . . . is . . . destined to house the creative infinitude within himself."

Morality and the Poet

The figures of the pagoda and the palace in *The Golden Bowl* will serve to introduce a statement of James's moral commitment, which occurs in a passage on Baltimore in *The American Scene*:

. . . I caught no glimpse of traffic, however mild, nor spied anything "tall" at the end of any vista. This was in itself really a benediction, since I had nowhere, from the first, been infatuated with tallness; I was infatuated only with the question of manners, in their largest sense—to the finer essence of which tallness had already defined itself to me as positively abhorrent.

The antithesis of tallness and manners, self-assertion and style, becomes, in the works of the younger Henry James, the quality of all experience, the counterpoint of existence.

This moral temper or point of view is sharply outlined when the novelist is read in conjunction with his father. The greatest of his works may now be judged as classics are judged, that is, as the product of a fully responsible writer, about whom one asks first of all not, "What made him?" but "What does he make of us?" This is, of course, the question which the best of James's critics have put first. If my account carries conviction the attempt to answer it may be made with more assurance. Many readers of Henry James will find nothing in this essay which contributes to their sense of the quality of James's view of the world, simply because they have read him well. For such critics and such readers its value will probably consist in the fact that it rules out for the future most questions of the "What made him?" order. We shall probably go on to learn a great deal about both James and his works, but, if his relationship to his father is recognized, no one will expect to learn anything about either by investigating his technique or his relation to his "society" in isolation from the fact of his conscious moral commitment. We shall be forced to start with the thesis that James made himself a world and explored it to the last inch.

We cannot as yet set any limits to Henry James's knowledge

of himself. Indeed those critics who have tried to analyse portions of his work in the context of the class structure or psychoanalysis have been successful only in those instances in which his father's view of these things overlapped Sorel's or Freud's. The science which will enable us to class Dante, or Goethe, or Shakespeare, or Henry James is still in the making. It will relate societies and individuals by a systematic employment of the truth written large in the theology of the elder James—every individual implicates a society and every society implicates a personality type. Because the younger Henry James built upon this truth we cannot fully analyse him.

Although no limits can be set to Henry James's knowledge of himself and the world he made we can set limits to his knowledge of ourselves. In the first place, James does not know us as we know ourselves when we read Homer or Shakespeare. He knows us as he knew himself. As James's readers we live again his "personal experiment," as Gabriel Nash calls it—we enter a world in which the boundaries of the ego shimmer, fade, and disappear, in which there are no lovers, no fathers or mothers, in which no one grows up, grows old or dies—a world in which narcissism strives to become absolute. To make this experiment with James is to learn much about ourselves, but not, unless the experiment of our lives is a failure, to learn all. Too many of James's most articulate readers have resembled the student who, after he had finished *Walden*, said that although it was easy to follow Thoreau into the woods, it was impossible to follow him out. But the charge that can be made against some of James's readers does not indict him. James, like Thoreau, came out for our delight, and he came out in character, with an obligation to a point of view. The figure he makes is, like those American figures of myth described by Constance Rourke, larger than life, but it stands free, rounded and entire.

In the second place, when I consider James as a moralist, I feel sure that his view of men and women has little or no nor-

mative value. It dissolves every conceivable ethical situation, because it deals with people as aspects of Man and God. There are no problems in James's universe, there is simply an insistent and swelling theme, which rises toward the very end of his life to an almost unendurable pitch. This is the theme of the life international. We may say that when he is read in the light of his father this anticipation of F. W. Dupee's is realized: "It is possible that we have still not come to the core of James's meaning; and that time, in addition to revealing much else about him, will show his international theme to have the same value—no more and no less—that Italian politics have in the total vision of Dante."

I turn to a far greater moralist Hawthorne, for an illustration of what I take to be the consequences of James's morality. In the story called *The Snow Image* two children go out to play in the new-fallen snow while their mother sits and watches by the window. The children, a delicate and imaginative little girl, and her vigorous, ruddy-cheeked younger brother, decide to make a snow image, a little sister who will run about and play with them. The mother listens fondly to the girl's instructions to the little boy and watches with surprise her success in shaping the image of a child. The mother is caught up in the game, though she also reflects in her adult character that perhaps *her* children are better qualified to make a fairy-tale come true than others. When the image begins to run about and play with the children the mother half-believes, half-disbelieves what she sees. Then the hard-headed and kindly father comes home; sees the thinly-clad little girl, captures her and, over the protests of the weeping children, carries her inside and sets her down before the roaring stove. The mother whose sense of the affair bridges the gulf between her husband's materialism and the shaping power of love in the children, cannot bring herself to accept the miracle and does not intervene. While the parents are out of the room the children scream—the snow image has become a puddle before

the stove.

This story, like the works of Henry James, is an account of the nature of human consciousness. The mother may be regarded as a type of mankind beset by inner and outer circumstance and endowed with creative power. She knows that the behests of circumstance cannot be avoided and she also knows that love cannot safely be denied. Man is caught between light and dark, between fire and ice, and these limitations are inescapable. Her consciousness is *of* these limitations. But in the morality of Henry James the limitations are transcended. It is as if James had said that the father, quite without knowing it, is working in the interest of the agonized children, and that the race will in consequence become a selfless concert of creativity. James hypostatizes these limitations as selfish materialism and spiritual love and makes them characters, aspects of the coming divine-natural humanity. To do this destroys the tragic ambivalence of the mother's awareness, an awareness of the human dilemma in which James had not the strength to rest. In the end James is not a tragic poet but the poet of his father's theodicy. From the viewpoint of the obstinate naturalist his commitment to life was incomplete because he broke down the barriers of personality.

Another of Hawthorne's stories, *My Kinsman Major Molineux*, suggests a comparison with James's moral physics. The hero of this story moves, as in James, from a region of primal innocence to the city to seek his fortune. This commitment to life (as I read the story) looses the torrent of his passions, and leads him almost to retreat, as mankind does in Henry James, back across the river away from the pitiable image of his striving self he has invoked. But there is nobility in that image, and in the end the young man is persuaded to stay in the earthly city. Man is, as Augustine says, a great deep, but he must not on that account try to be either more or less than man. Those who hold fast to Hawthorne's sense of our limitations will not be tempted to take part in Henry James's "marriage" of appearance and reality—a shot-

gun wedding in which the parties are constrained to love.

Yet having said so much from the naturalist's viewpoint I must add that Americans are not by right of birth naturalists, and that to know ourselves as this poet knew us is to know ourselves as Americans. A study of the works of Henry James will one day make a chapter in that history of the American imagination to which D. H. Lawrence and Constance Rourke have been the initial contributors. It may be argued that until that history is written and linked to those other languages of experience provided by the European classics we have no right to call ourselves naturalists, because we have an inadequate conception of the variety and spontaneity of mankind.